

# Contracts And Warranties

## 3-day Cancellation

If you sign a contract in your home, federal regulations and state laws require that the contract must include a provision stating that you may cancel it for any reason by midnight of the third business day.

## 30-day Warranty

The California Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act provides a 30-day warranty on all new and used hearing aids sold in California. If the hearing aid is not specifically fit for the buyer's particular needs, the device may be returned to the hearing aid dispenser within 30 days of the date of actual receipt by the buyer or completion of fitting by the seller, whichever occurs later. If the buyer returns the device, the seller must either adjust or replace the device or promptly refund the total amount paid.

If the buyer returns the device within the 30-day period, the seller is required, without charge and within a reasonable time, to adjust, repair or replace the device. If, after the adjustment, repair or replacement, the device is still not specifically fit for the buyer's particular needs, the device may be returned for a refund of the **total amount paid** including all payments and any trade-in exchanged as part of the transaction.

## Receipt Requirements

Your hearing aid dispenser must provide the following information on your hearing aid receipt:

- ☐ The date the sale is concluded.
- ☐ The make, serial number, and model of the hearing aid.
- ☐ The dispenser's business address and the office hours when the dispenser will be available to adjust and service the hearing aid.
- ☐ Information about whether the aid is used or reconditioned.
- ☐ The license number of the hearing aid dispenser selling the aid and any other dispenser or trainee involved in the sale.

Hearing aid technology is developing rapidly and provides a range of new options and opportunities for hearing-impaired persons. If you are hearing-impaired, a good hearing aid may greatly enhance your well-being. We wish you success in selecting a hearing aid and in using it to maximum benefit.

If you have additional questions after reading this brochure, please call the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau at (916) 574-7990. We cannot recommend a hearing aid or hearing aid dispenser, but other assistance will be provided.

## SOUNDING IT OUT

Complaints against hearing aid dispensers are handled by the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau  
P.O. Box 980490  
W. Sacramento, CA 95798-0490  
(916) 574-7990  
1-800-952-5210

The Hearing HealthCare Providers/California is a professional association which can mediate complaints and has an ethics committee in both northern and southern California:

Hearing HealthCare Providers/California  
14081 Yorba Street, Suite 204  
Tustin, CA 92780  
(714) 508-0276

The California Speech-Language-Hearing Association is a professional association of audiologists and speech language pathologists that can review complaints. The association can also refer you to speech and hearing clinics or programs in your area. Contact:

California Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
825 University Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
(916) 921-1568

The International Hearing Society maintains a hearing aid helpline and will provide basic information for those with questions about hearing loss, hearing aids, and choosing a hearing instrument specialist. You may contact the IHS at:

International Hearing Society  
16880 Middlebelt Road, Suite 4  
Livonia, MI 48154  
1-800-521-5247 (Toll-free)

OSP 99 33462

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau  
P.O. Box 980490  
W. Sacramento, CA 95798-0490  
State of California  
Department of Consumer Affairs

Bulk rate  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit no. 685

# DOLLARS & SENSE ABOUT HEARING AIDS

Loss of hearing is America's largest and least recognized physical challenge. One of every ten persons in this country is affected by some degree of hearing loss.

What?

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau  
P.O. Box 980490, W. Sacramento CA 95798-0490

## Definition Of A Hearing Aid

A hearing aid is a miniature sound enhancement system. There are many styles of hearing aids and no single hearing instrument is suitable for all types of hearing loss. Some hearing aids fit behind the ear, some in the ear, and others in the ear canal. The type you may need will depend upon the nature of your individual hearing loss. Your hearing aid dispenser will help you select the most appropriate type of hearing device for your loss. You should work closely with a specialist (hearing aid dispenser or audiologist) with whom you are comfortable to determine how to address your particular hearing problem.

## Choosing A Hearing Aid Dispenser

Proper fitting depends on the judgment and skill of the hearing aid dispenser you select. Your hearing aid dispenser will not only test your hearing and help you select a proper hearing instrument, but should also offer support, encouragement, and instruction while you learn to use it. Here are some recommendations to follow:

- ☐ Choose a hearing aid dispenser in your area who will be routinely available to assist you.
- ☐ Call the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau to verify whether the dispenser has a current and valid license, and if any disciplinary actions have been taken against him/her.
- ☐ Check with the Better Business Bureau to see whether complaints have been filed against the hearing aid dispenser.
- ☐ Ask friends with hearing aids for their recommendations. Word-of-mouth recommendations are among the best advertisements. If you are a senior citizen, you might check with senior citizen clubs and organizations in your area for good, first-hand recommendations.

It is important to choose a licensed hearing aid professional with whom you feel comfortable. This may be a hearing aid dispenser, a dispensing audiologist, or a physician licensed as a hearing aid dispenser. A dispensing audiologist is licensed both as an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser, and a physician dispenser has a medical license and a hearing aid dispenser's license. All three types of professionals have passed written and practical skills license examinations to measure competence.

## Hearing Aid Selection

Hearing aids require a significant financial investment and should be chosen with care. Hearing aid prices vary greatly, but generally speaking, the price of a hearing aid increases with its complexity and number of features. You can work with your hearing aid dispenser to choose the aid or aids that will give you the best results. Your choice of a hearing aid should not depend on its appearance or size. Your main goal should be to select a hearing aid that will provide the most effective assistance for your hearing impairment.

You must take many things into consideration when you select a hearing aid. The first criterion is your hearing loss itself. What kind of loss is it? Is it minor, moderate, or severe? Can it be helped by a hearing aid? To answer these important preliminary questions, you should see a physician or audiologist to have your hearing tested. Your hearing aid dispenser may only perform hearing tests for the purpose of fitting your hearing aid. We strongly recommend that you see a physician to determine that your hearing loss cannot be helped medically or that you do not have a physical or medical condition which would rule out the use of hearing aids for you.

Let's assume that these questions have been answered, and you are a candidate for a hearing aid. Your hearing aid dispenser needs to consider your occupation, lifestyle, environment, and any physical limitations you might have before recommending a particular type of hearing aid.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you select and purchase a hearing aid:

- ☐ How do I feel about the quality of sound?
- ☐ Does the aid help me better understand speech in noisy places or in quiet places?
- ☐ Is the aid comfortable to wear?
- ☐ Are the controls easy to handle?
- ☐ Do I fully understand the contract I will sign with the dispenser? Are all costs clearly indicated?
- ☐ Does my contract clearly state my rights if the hearing aid I buy is not suitable for me or is faulty?
- ☐ Will the dispenser be readily available to assist and counsel me after I receive the hearing aid?

A trial period can help you answer many of these questions. Even though you may have to pay a rental fee (which is applied to the purchase price in most cases), a trial period is a way for you to make an intelligent, informed decision about a hearing aid.

# Things To Remember

- (1) Call the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau to verify whether your dispenser has a current and valid license. The agency can also tell you what disciplinary actions, if any, have been taken against the dispenser.
- (2) A properly fitted hearing aid can amplify sound and enrich your life, but it cannot restore permanently lost hearing, prevent further hearing loss, or cure dizzy spells.
- (3) If you see hearing aid advertising which sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Apply good judgment when evaluating advertisements about hearing aids.
- (4) If you detect signs of high sales pressure, be especially cautious.
- (5) Don't be pressured into purchasing a hearing aid or signing a contract.
- (6) Before you complete your purchase, be certain your contract satisfactorily addresses refund and warranty provisions.
- (7) Your signature on a contract is your commitment to fulfill the terms of that contract. Read it carefully and understand everything you are asked to sign.
- (8) It is a good idea to take someone with you to assist you in understanding all the terms of the contract.
- (9) Choose a hearing aid dispenser who treats you with respect and sensitivity, and do not purchase a hearing aid from a dispenser if he or she intimidates you.
- (10) Be wary if a hearing aid dispenser tries to discourage you from seeing a physician.
- (11) Financial assistance may be available for the purchase of your hearing aid. If your hearing aid dispenser is unable to direct you to a source of assistance, you may write or call your local United Way, MediCal, the Veteran's Administration, or the California Department of Health Services.

## Mail Order Purchases

California law provides that mail order hearing aids may only be purchased through licensed dispensers. The law states that when hearing aids are purchased by mail order there must be no fitting, selection, or adaptation of the instrument and no advice given with respect to these things. Additionally, no advice may be given with respect to the taking of an ear-impression for an earmold by the seller. Finally, before you purchase by mail order you must supply the seller with a statement signed by a physician, audiologist, or California licensed hearing aid dispenser that verifies a direct examination of your ear.

## The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau is the state agency which licenses and regulates hearing aid dispensers and is part of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The agency administers the license examination for hearing aid dispensers and enforces hearing aid laws and regulations. To file a complaint, send a letter summarizing your grievance to the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau and include copies of all paperwork related to the purchase of your hearing aid. You may also call 1-800-952-5210 or (916) 574-7990 to request a consumer complaint form.